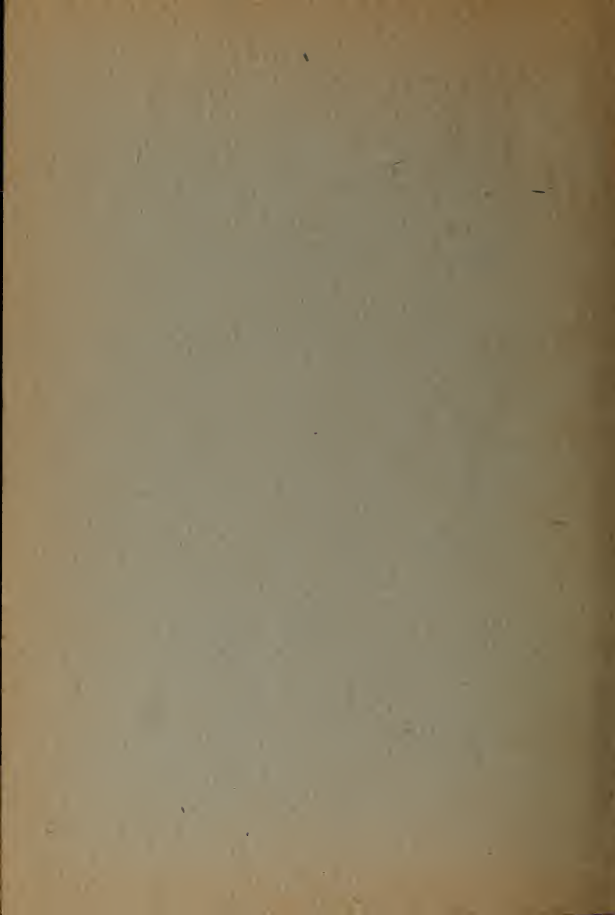


**LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 189**  
**Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius**

# **Eugenics Made Plain**

**Havelock Ellis**



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# EUGENICS MADE PLAIN

## CHAPTER I

### THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

We rightly regard the nineteenth century as a great period of amelioration in the conditions of social life. Undoubtedly such amelioration was urgently needed. The gradual development of industrial invention during the second half of the eighteenth century had produced a dislocation of social life. Machinery, with its enormously increased productiveness, had destroyed the old-fashioned simple, rough, but fairly wholesome life of rural industry under the domestic roof. The workers were brought into the towns, huddled together under conditions which had not been made for them; they became more prosperous, indeed, and for a time they increased and multiplied. But their prosperity was not civilization.

What the conditions of life were like during the greater part of the first half of the nineteenth century, when scarcely any public money was spent on sanitation in comparison with the vast sums which have since been spent, we know from the famous report on the "Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of Great Britain," written in 1842 by Sir Edwin Chadwick. It is a wonderful picture of a vigorous and industrious nation, living—and very often dying—in almost unspeakable filth and disease. A less known and more detailed picture, very valuable as an illustration is furnished by Hec-

tor Gavin's report on the condition of Bethnal Green, published in 1848 under the title of "Sanitary Rambles." Bethnal Green was originally a rural district which by industrial expansion had just become urban; many of the dwellings were huts, summer-houses, and sheds, never intended for use as houses. At this period there were thirty-three miles of streets in Bethnal Green and at least one hundred miles of byways (not including courts and alleys), yet only a few miles were sewered. Dustbins were unknown, privies were few, slops were thrown from the windows, the streets were the common reservoirs for refuse of all kinds, sometimes accumulated in mountainous and evil-smelling heaps. The task of scavenging Bethnal Green, with its one hundred and thirty-three miles of dwellings was entrusted to "thirteen decrepit old men," and it was estimated that they required ninety days to complete a single round of the parish. No wonder that disease and epidemics flourished. From all parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland very similar details have been furnished. The people who lived under these conditions were for the most part, we are told, indifferent to them; they were reckless, improvident, intemperate, feeding on dainties when they could buy them, and the next day perhaps eating the coarsest of food, at the same time multiplying as carelessly as rabbits, and leaving to death and disease the task of preventing any excessive rise in the population, so that while the birth-rate was rising the death-rate was also rising. The race remained vigorous. It was noted, indeed (as in Bethnal Green), that the people were not physically the equals of the generation of thirty years earlier. Of the London weavers, for instance,



it was said in a medical report that, though not originally a large race, they formerly contained healthy and well-made men; but "the whole race of them is rapidly descending to the size of Lilliputians; you could not raise a Grenadier company amongst them." Though they seemed to be deteriorating, however, and though they suffered so severely from death and disease, the English people were increasing rapidly (from 1811 to 1821, indeed, more rapidly than at any other time); and, moreover, English workmen were noted for what was termed their "savage industry," surpassing that of any other people. Even in France and Germany it was found profitable to import English navvies and pay them double wages on account of their superior energy. The conditions of old English rural life had built up a powerful stock which could not be immediately destroyed by migration to the towns and by the revolution in industrialism.

It is important to remember, however, that the change taking place during the early part of the nineteenth century, under the stimulus of the introduction of machinery into industrial life, was far from being confined to towns; it was not even accounted for by the migration from the country into the towns, and the fact that, even when Chadwick wrote, among the lower working classes in London only one-third were natives of London. The change was more profound. It affected the country as directly as it affected the towns. This was clearly seen at the time by the sagacious mind of Joseph Fletcher, who in 1849 issued the papers and charts he had presented to the Statistical Society in a privately distributed volume—my own copy belonged to the famous Radical leader, Joseph Hume, whose

reforming energy has left so deep a mark on English social life—entitled, "Summary of the Moral Statistics of England and Wales." Fletcher is trying to explain why it was that, though the rise in the population of England and Wales during the nineteenth century had been less than twofold, the rise in criminal commitments for the more serious offences during the same period had been five fold. This rise in criminality had not chiefly occurred, as we might expect, in the towns, where a new and unsettled population was huddled together under filthy and unregulated conditions, and where at the same time increased police activity rendered the detection of crime easier, but in the country. The reason was, Fletcher pointed out, that the previous half-century of mechanical organization and economic readjustment had really affected the country as much and as early as the towns, and had produced a great social change. The revolution in agriculture had, indeed, begun early in the eighteenth century before the revolution in manufacturing industries. It had affected field work, the subdivision of labor, the production of commodities, and in so doing it had changed rural classes in their relations of neighborhood as well as of service. The small farmer was no longer the type of his profession; the workman, in the country as in the town, was no longer the artisan companion of his employer, perhaps domiciled with him, and expecting to succeed him by his abilities, industry and frugality. He had become merely a "laborer," a citizen indeed rather than a domestic, but a citizen without friends, ignorant, intemperate and improvident. Fletcher was astounded that the middle-class capitalists, who were reaping such enormous profits from the new con-

ditions, were so indifferent to the condition of the workers who brought them their wealth. "It would almost appear," he wrote, "as though ignorance and degradation, like poverty and heathenism, must wear a garb picturesque and foreign, ere they can awaken our sympathies with sufficient power to stimulate us to exertion." But he saw that "a term appears to be rapidly approaching to the thoughtlessness which accepts the wealth procured by the more economical organization of society, without attempting to secure its foundations anew by more united efforts to fit the laborer to discharge the duties of good citizenship." Even while he wrote, the new era had already begun. The nineteenth century Hercules was already occupied in the gigantic task of cleansing the stables of King Demos and of improving the conditions of life under which lived the creators of the new industrial age. The streets were being paved and the filth cleared away, sewers were being built, the police system was being reformed, the need of pure water and of general lighting was becoming recognized, and the sanitary conditions of dwellings were receiving attention. The need for it was so gross and so obvious that reform in these matters could meet with little opposition.

It was not so, however, with the reforms—not less necessary, but less obvious—which concerned the conditions under which the laboring classes worked. What we call in the large and general sense factory legislation began, indeed, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but in a very small and feeble way. The enriched middle classes felt no strong impulse to move in this direction. They obscurely realized, no doubt, that the new conditions which had sprung up were not un-

favorable to their own interests, and that even the ignorance and degradation of the unorganized laborers were working together for the good of that middleclass supremacy, and the increased industrial productiveness associated with it, which seemed so essential an element of national greatness. The workers must be left free, the middle class believed, even though that meant a freedom to work themselves to death or a freedom to starve. Thus it happened that the early pioneers in factory legislation were of little note or influence, and were usually overwhelmed by the strong opposition they encountered. It was by the support of the aristocratic class that they became influential. The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury here played a part of the first magnitude; his moderation and sagacity, the general respect and sympathy which he was able to command, enabled him to inaugurate a great variety of beneficial reforms in the conditions of the workers, of women and children as well as of men, and even the philanthropic basis on which he placed these reforms was undoubtedly at that period a great assistance in carrying them through, although it has since gradually given place to a more democratic basis on which the workers themselves claim a large part in laying down the conditions which they regard as most suitable for their work. The era of factory legislation is not yet over; it is, on the contrary, ever extending its range and emphasising its demands, while nowadays, also, it meets with no active opposition, even among those who realize that the improvement of the conditions of life will not affect all that it was once supposed capable of achieving.

A further and more intimate extension of

the great movement for bettering the conditions of life took place when it was realized that the improvement of material conditions, to which had already been superadded the improvement of the conditions of work, must be further reinforced by an effort to ameliorate the conditions under which the workers are born and bred. This extension may be said to have been inaugurated by the nationalization of education which in its main lines was accomplished in England forty years ago. But during quite recent years this extension of the movement has been widened and deepened in a remarkable manner. Education is beginning to mean very much more than it meant forty years ago. Not merely have the subjects for instruction greatly increased, but education now has grown beyond the narrow sphere of instruction altogether and covers matters that are much more fundamental than instruction. We are beginning to include under education a certain amount of provision for meals where necessary, an attention to cleanliness, the special care of defective children, and an ever-increasing amount of medical inspection and supervision.

It is not sufficient, however, to begin the care of children at school age. The mischief is often done before the child is old enough to go to school. Thus it has come about that within recent years the attempt has been made to catch the child at birth, and to bring it under beneficial social influences from the moment it begins to breathe. In England this movement is largely embodied in the Notification of Birth Act which came into force in 1908, and is, so far, an adoptive and not compulsory Act. In accordance with this Act (the germ of which was found in the practice

of a district in France) a child's birth is notified within a few hours; a qualified lady Health Visitor, if necessary, gives the mother advice concerning the management of her baby, and, when required, medical aid is called in.

It is an important part of this movement for the care of the child—now termed puericulture—that the mother, when healthy, should suckle her baby. The late Professor Budin may be said to have inaugurated puericulture by the establishment of the Infant Consultation in Paris in 1892; here mothers were encouraged to bring their infants every week to be weighed and examined, and necessary advice was given. These Infant Consultations have now spread throughout Europe and have been very instrumental in lowering infantile mortality. Milk depots, also established by Budin, are now becoming common for the sale or free distribution of cow's milk when breast feeding is impossible or undesirable. When the mother's milk is healthy, it is, however, always desirable that she should suckle her child. There is no complete substitute for mother's milk, and no beneficial influence in a child's life that can replace the living and intelligent care of its own mother, even if the child is suckled by another woman. The mortality of hand-fed infants is sometimes more than three times that of the breast-fed, but even among the breast-fed it has been found (as at Lyons) that the mortality of infants suckled by strangers is double that of infants suckled by their own mothers. The advantages of a mother suckling her baby are more than merely physical; it is a stimulus to her affection of her child, and a guarantee that the child will receive in other respects the loving



care it needs. On such grounds as these, in some towns, premiums are bestowed on suckling mothers in one form or another, and it has even been proposed that a mother should be bound by law to suckle her infant, except when her inability to do so is certified by a physician. The laws of most countries already insist on the mother remaining away from work for a few weeks (usually four to eight weeks) after her confinement; but this period is very inadequate so far as the child's interests are concerned, while provision is seldom made for the woman during this period of compulsory rest. To a very slight extent this neglect is remedied in the National Insurance Bill for the four weeks during which a woman is not legally allowed to work. A compromise is sometimes made by attaching to factories a nursery where the mother may suckle her baby in the intervals of her work.

It is not enough, however, to begin the social care of the infant at birth. It has been living for nine months before birth, and it is now recognized that the conditions of its life must be guarded by society during that supremely important formative period. An active study of the conditions affecting the pre-natal welfare of the child, and the attempt to modify them favorably—a highly important part of what is now termed puericulture—only dates from about 1895, and is speedily associated with the name of Pinard in France and his pupils. A number of investigations have shown that the state of the infant at birth is greatly affected by the conditions under which the mother has lived during the previous months. The children of working women who are able to rest during the latter months of pregnancy are to a marked degree larger and finer than

the children of working women who have pursued their occupation to within a short time of their confinement, even though the women who thus continue their work may be entirely healthy and robust. Moreover, such rest is a powerful agent in preventing premature birth. This is an important matter, for in civilized countries today—notably in England and in France—a large per cent of the births are premature, and the child who is born before its time comes into the world in a relatively unprotected state, and is unduly liable to perish or else to lead a permanently enfeebled life. In most English towns immaturity is regarded as the chief single cause of infant mortality, accounting for about 30 per cent of infant deaths, and for a very large proportion of relatively defective individuals among the survivors. It has been found that rest during the later months of pregnancy is a powerful influence in the prevention of the birth of immature children; the average period of development within its mother's body is three weeks longer for the child of the mother who rests during the latter months of pregnancy (for rest during the earlier months has comparatively little influence on the child) as compared with the child of the mother who has enjoyed no such rest. Such opportunity for completing its development is of immense and lifelong advantage to the new-born infant, while the rest is also of benefit to the mother, who cannot with impunity stand the double strain of work and of nourishing the future child within her. Yet the importance of such rest for women in its bearing on the elevation of the race and the lightening of social burdens is still understood by few, and is not adequately insisted



on and provided for by the laws of any nation. More than ten years ago (in 1900) the International Congress of Hygiene passed a resolution that "every working woman is entitled to rest during the last three months of her pregnancy." No such measure can be anywhere realized without the active co-operation of the community providing for the mother during that period of enforced rest; but no community has yet shown itself intelligent enough to realize the need of making such provision in its own interest. So true is it, as a distinguished authority has stated, that "today the dregs of the human species—the blind, the deaf-mute, the degenerate, the nervous, the vicious, the idiotic, the imbecile, the cretin, and the epileptic—are better protected than pregnant women." We shall some day have to reverse this estimate of the values of things.

We may trace the beginning of a higher conception of motherhood in the increase of Schools for Mothers, although these are still for the most part voluntary institutions. Until recently knowledge of the duties of motherhood was believed to come by Nature; that belief was, no doubt, a prolific source of the excessive infantile mortality which has so long prevailed. In the year 1900, however, Dr. Miele, a young Belgian doctor of Socialistic views, started at Ghent an admirable School of Mothers, with no less than twelve different branches of activity. Mr. Bertrand Russell visited the school, brought the idea over to England, and in 1907, with the aid of Dr. Sykes, one of the ablest and most energetic of our Medical Officers of Health, the first English School for Mothers was established at St. Pancras. Since then Schools for

Mothers have begun to spring up in many countries. Here instruction is given in elementary anatomy and physiology and the care of children—instruction which cannot fail to be extended to cover the care and management of pregnancy.

## CHAPTER II

## THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY

When we survey the movement of social reform which has been carried on during the past hundred years, we thus see that it has proceeded in four stages: (1) the effort to clear away the gross filth of our cities, to improve dwellings, to introduce sanitation, and to combat disease; (2) the attempt to attack the problem more thoroughly by regulating the conditions of work and introducing the elaborate system of factory legislation; (3) the still more fundamental step of taking in hand the children who have not yet reached the age for work, nationalizing education, and ultimately pushing back the care and oversight of infants even to the moment of birth; and (4) finally, most fundamental step of all, the effort, which is still only beginning, to provide the conditions of healthy life even before birth.

It must be remembered that this movement in all its four stages is still in active progress among us. It is not mere ancient history. On the contrary, it is a movement that is continually spreading, and at every point becoming more thorough, more harmoniously organized. Before long it will probably involve a national medical service which will impose on doctors as their primary duty, not the care of disease, but the preservation of health.

We have to realize, at the same time, that this movement has been exclusively concerned, not with the improvement of the quality of

human life, but exclusively with the betterment of the conditions under which life is lived. It tacitly assumed that we have no control over human life and no responsibility for its production. It accepted human life—however enormous it might be in quantity, however defective in quality—as a Godgiven fact which it would be impious to question. It heriotically set itself to the endless task of cleansing the channels down which this muddy torrent swept. It never went to the source.

But the movement of social reform by no means becomes unnecessary because it touches only the conditions of life and not life itself. The conditions of life can never become unimportant; they may improve to such an extent that their regulation demands comparatively little of our energy, and the regulation itself may become largely a routine. But it can never become a negligible routine. The exclusive concentration on it has caused a reaction to the opposite extreme which must not lead us astray. Only take care of the soil, these workers at social reform said in effect, and the seed is no matter. That, as we can now see, was a silly enough position to take up. But it must not induce us to countenance the opposite fallacy with which we are today threatened: only take care of the seed and the soil is no matter. On the contrary, it can never cease to matter. The finest of living organisms may easily be starved, the more easily, perhaps, the finer it is. And every ill-adapted external condition, leading to imperfect or defective nutrition, is really a kind of starvation. Even if we believe that bad conditions only affect the present generation and have no permanent influence on the race, the fact that they do affect, and very seriously affect, the present generation, is ample reason

for setting them as far right as we can. Thus we have no warrant for relaxing the movement of social reform for the improvement of the conditions of life; but on the contrary, we need to extend and deepen it.

Yet at the same time we have to face the fact that the further we move along the path of social reforms, with our aims concentrated exclusively on the task of improving the conditions, the greater are the burdens we pile upon ourselves. We are making the way smooth for the fit, it is true, and in so doing we aid them to become more fit and to pass on their fitness to future generations. But at the same time we are also, in even greater degrees, making the path smoother for the unfit, helping them to compete with the fit, and encouraging them to propagate their unfitness, though on a rougher road they would succumb to a much greater extent than the fit and be much less likely to pass on their unfitness to future generations.

As an illustration of how this works out, we may take the disease of tuberculosis, or consumption, which happens to be conspicuous at present by reason of the great scheme of national sanatoria for consumptives embodied in the National Insurance Bill. Consumption is at the present day that disease which is responsible for the greatest and most widespread and lingering amount of illness, resulting in much misery to all concerned, a heavy social burden, and an enormous expense in money. It is, without question, desirable that we should grapple seriously with consumption, take in hand the persons who fall victims to the disease, and cure them, if possible, as soon as may be. But what is the result? Some people seem to imagine that when the consumptive is sent away from the sanatorium

it will be as a sound and robust individual, a satisfactory citizen of the state. Far from it. The disease has, perhaps, been arrested, but that is all. The subject tends to remain fragile, permanently below the physical level of his fellows, and always on the verge of disaster. If the disease has really seized deep hold of him its arrest can never mean repair; permanent defect remains. Moreover—and this is the really important point so far as the race is concerned—the deficient vitality and the poor physical development which marked him out as the apt victim for the disease, and which were inborn, will still remain when the disease is averted, and will be transmitted to his descendants, to form new seed-beds for disease in the next generation. It is possible to deny that in the strict and literal sense consumption is inherited. But no one can deny that the defective physique and imperfect vitality which form the suitable soil for consumption may very easily be inherited and may lead to more consumption, and not so very seldom to imbecility and insanity as well. For more than half a century there has been a steady decline in the deathrate from consumption in England and Scotland; but on the other hand, there is some reason to think that there has been a steady rise in insanity, and that the insane and feeble-minded are specially liable to fall victims to consumption, as well as to be born of stocks in which consumption prevails. Thus it becomes a question whether in conquering consumption, and leaving other things as they are, our loss is not greater than our gain. We must not be surprised if we find some declaring that the tubercle bacillus which is the germ of consumption “forms a rough, but, on the whole, very serviceable check on the survival of and propagation of the unfit,” and that “if

tomorrow the tubercle bacillus were non-existent it would be nothing short of a national calamity. We are not yet ready for its disappearance." Certainly we cannot cease to fight against consumption, for even as a method of destroying the unfit it is slow, cruel and expensive, at the same time seriously handicapping the fit. But we have to recognize that the problem is a little more complicated than we thought, and that we may have to make radical changes in our method of approaching it.

These considerations lead us on to a very fundamental fact, which cannot fail to depress those who in their efforts to raise the level of civilization have relied entirely on the improvement of external conditions. The fact is, that the results of such improvements have in no degree corresponded to the efforts which have been made to obtain them or to the expectations of those who initiated them.

It is true, indeed, that much that has been said of late concerning the degeneracy and deterioration of the race in recent times is quite incapable of proof. We have vivid pictures of the conditions under which the people lived seventy years ago when the great movement for the reform of these conditions first came into action. But we have no measured and precise representation of the state of the people themselves who lived under these conditions. We have, indeed, no adequate and classified knowledge (as the Royal Commission of the Feeble-minded had a cause to complain) even of the state of the people today. It is, therefore, idle to draw comparisons or to attempt to prove that the race is radically inferior to what it was when the era of social reform began. We can, indeed, point to isolated facts which indicate a change; but isolated



facts can prove very little, and, moreover, they cannot be properly interpreted except in the light of other facts respecting which we are ignorant. Looking broadly at the matter, we are not entitled to affirm positively that the race today has fallen below the level it occupied seventy years ago, though we may see reason to believe that it is more vigorous in some respects and less vigorous in others.

But the terrible thing is that we are unable to go beyond this tepid conclusion. Here have we been expending enormous enthusiasm, labor and money in improving the conditions of life, with the notion in our heads that we should thereby be improving life itself, and after seventy years we find no convincing proof that the quality of our people is one whit the better than it was when for a large part they lived in filth, were ravaged by disease, bred at random, soaked themselves in alcohol, and took no thought for the morrow. Our boasted social reform, we are thus tempted to think, has been a matter of bricks and mortar—a piling up of hospitals, asylums, prisons and workhouses—while our comparatively sober habits may be merely a sign of the quietly valetudinarian way of life imposed on a race which no longer possesses the stamina to withstand excess.

One of the most obvious tests of our degree of success in social reform directed to the betterment of social conditions is to be found in the amount of our pauperism and the condition of our paupers. If the amelioration of the conditions of life can effect even a fraction of what has been expected of it, the results ought to be seen in the diminution of our pauperism and the improvement of the condition of our paupers. Yet so far as numbers are concerned, the vast army of our paupers have remained fairly constant during the whole period of



social reform, if indeed it has not increased. A few years ago the numbers of paupers in England and Wales on a given day—even omitting the vast contingents of casuals and the insane—was estimated to be equal to the population of Liverpool, the largest provincial city in England, while at the same time the number for a whole year approximated to two millions, or nearly equal to the population of the three largest provincial cities of England—Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham—put together. Stated in another way, paupers constituted 47.7 per 1,000 of the whole population. The money spent on them has for a long time been increasing every year. Yet, as the Royal Commissioners on the Poor Law wrote in 1909, “notwithstanding our assumed moral and material progress, and notwithstanding the enormous annual expenditure, amounting to nearly sixty millions a year upon poor relief, education and public health, we still have a vast army of persons quartered upon us unable to support themselves—an army which in numbers has really shown signs of increase rather than decrease.” And to the ineffectiveness of our methods, or rather lack of methods, the Royal Commissioners, especially perhaps in their Minority Report, have shed much light. It was to be expected that these muddled methods should be most marked in all that concerns the beginnings of life, for that is precisely where our whole treatment of social reform has been most at fault. Children under sixteen form nearly one-third of the paupers relieved. In the United Kingdom the Poor Law authorities always have on their books as outdoor paupers fifty thousand infants under four years of age. As regards the annual number of births in the Poor Law institutions of the United Kingdom, there are not even definite

statistics available; but it is estimated in the Minority Report that the number is probably over fifteen thousand, 30 per cent of these being legitimate children and 70 per cent illegitimate. There is no system in the treatment of the mothers, and often not the most elementary care in the treatment of the infants. In some districts all outside help is severely refused to unmarried women who expect to become mothers; in other districts it is only the unmarried mothers who are assisted; there is no agreement as to whether motherhood should be subordinated to "morals" or "morals" to motherhood, nor any attempt to place the claims of humanity on an independent basis. It is scarcely surprising that though the general infantile mortality is excessively high, the infantile mortality of the workhouse-born babies is two or three times as high as that among the general population. And the Royal Commissioners pathetically asked, "To what is this retrogression due?" It cannot be due to lack of expenditure or to lack of costly and elaborate machinery. No; it certainly is not. It is in large part due, as we are now just beginning to recognize, to the concentration of our activities on the mere conditions of life, to our neglect of the betterment of life itself. We have failed to realize that the whitening of our sepulchres will not limit the number of corpses placed in those sepulchres. It is the renewal of the spirit within that is needed, not alone the improvement of material conditions, but the regeneration of life.

If we wish to realize, more in detail, the slight extent to which our efforts to better the conditions of life have raised the quality of life itself, we have but to turn to the problem of the feeble-minded which during

recent years has attracted so much attention. It was estimated by the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded in 1908 that there are in England and Wales nearly 150,000 notably defective persons, or, exclusive of certified lunatics, nearly a half per cent of the whole population. Excluding London, over 11,000 grossly feeble-minded paupers are chargeable to the Poor Law; and for the United Kingdom generally the Royal Commission on the Poor Law estimated that there are over 60,000 mentally defective persons in the ordinary wards of the general mixed workhouses, exclusive of 100,000 defective pauper patients in county and borough asylums. But nearly half of the whole number of feeble-minded persons in the country are at the present time unprovided for and neglected, a danger to themselves and to society; while a large proportion of the other half, though provided for, are by no means under the best possible conditions.

It is necessary to remember that this feeble-mindedness is largely handed on by heredity. It was formerly supposed that idiocy and feeble-mindedness are mainly due to environmental conditions—to the drink, depravity, general disease, or lack of nutrition of the parents; and a few authorities on the feeble-minded still hold that view. But serious as the results of such bad environmental conditions may be, and frequent as they are in the parentage of the feeble-minded, they do not form the fundamental factor in the production of the feeble-minded, and some scientific authorities even deny that they can produce mental defect in the offspring at all, though that position is doubtless too extreme. Exact investigation is now showing that feeble-mindedness is inherited to an enormous extent. Some years ago Dr. Ashby, speaking from a

large experience, estimated that at least 75 per cent of feeble-minded children are born with an inherited tendency to mental defect. More precise investigation has since shown that this estimate was under the mark. Dr. Tredgold, who in England has most carefully studied the heredity of the feeble-minded, found that in over 82 per cent there is a bad, nervous inheritance. In a large number of cases the bad heredity was associated with alcoholism or consumption in the parentage, but in only a small proportion of cases (about 7 per cent) was it probable that alcoholism and consumption alone, and usually combined, had sufficed to produce the defective condition of the children, while environmental conditions only produced mental defect in 10 per cent of cases. Heredity is the chief cause of feeble-mindedness, and Tredgold has never seen a normal child born of two feeble-minded parents. The very thorough investigation of the heredity of the feeble-minded which is now being carried on at the institution for their care at Vineland, New Jersey, shows even more decisive results. By making careful pedigrees of the families to which the inmates at Vineland belong, it is seen that in a large proportion of cases feeble-mindedness is handed on from generation to generation and is traceable through three generations, though it sometimes skips a generation. In one family of 319 persons, 110 were known to be feeble-minded, and only 42 known to be normal; the families tended to be large—sometimes very large—and there were cases in which a woman would have eight feeble-minded children by different husbands, not counting other children who died in infancy.

Not only is feeble-mindedness inherited, and in a much greater degree than has hitherto been suspected even by expert authorities, but the feeble-minded tend to have a much larger

number of children than normal people. That, indeed, we might expect, apart altogether from the question of innate fertility. The feeble-minded have no forethought and no self-restraint. They are not ordinarily capable of resisting their own impulses or the solicitations of others, and they are unable to understand adequately the motives which guide the conduct of ordinary people. The average number of children of feeble-minded people seems to be usually about one-third more than in normal families, and is sometimes very much greater. Dr. Ettie Sayer, when investigating for the London County Council the family histories of one hundred normal families and one hundred families in which mentally defective children had been found, ascertained, not only that mental and nervous disease, consumption, and drunkenness were very much more prevalent in the latter, but also that their families averaged 7.6 children, while in the normal families they averaged 5. In 150 feeble-minded cases especially investigated by Tredgold it was found that they belonged to families in which 1,269 children had been born; that is to say, 7.3 per family, or, counting still-born children, 8.4. Nearly two-thirds of these abnormally large families were mentally defective in a high degree, or in a slight degree which showed itself in a tendency to become diseased, paupers, or criminals, or else to die early.

Here, indeed, we have a counterbalancing influence, for in the large families of the feeble-minded, as indeed to some extent in large families generally, there is a correspondingly large infantile mortality. As many as 170 in Tredgold's group of children were born dead, and a very large number died early. Eichholz, another authority on the feeble-minded, found that in one group of defective families about 60 per cent of the children died

young. That is probably an unusually high proportion, and in Eichholz's cases it seems to have been associated with very unusually large families; but the infant mortality in such families is always very high.

This large early mortality of the offspring of the feeble-minded is, however, very far from settling the question of the disposal of the mentally defective, or we should not find large families of them propagated from generation to generation. The large number who die early merely serves, roughly speaking, to reduce the size of the abnormal family to the size of the normal family, and some authorities consider it scarcely suffices to do this, for we must remember that there is a considerable mortality even in the so-called normal family during early life. Moreover, we have to consider the social disorder and the heavy expense which accompany this large infantile mortality. Illegitimacy is frequently the result of feeble-mindedness since feeble-minded women are peculiarly unable to resist temptation. A great number of such women are continually coming into the workhouses and giving birth to illegitimate children whom they are unable to support, and who often never become capable of supporting themselves, but in their turn tend to produce a new feeble-minded generation, more especially since the men who are attracted to these feeble-minded women are themselves—according to the generally recognized tendency of the abnormal to be attracted to the abnormal—feeble-minded or otherwise mentally defective. This is not only the cause of a great burden on the rates, but also a perpetual danger to society and a constant, it may be ever-increasing, depreciation of the quality of the race.

Moreover, by our present methods of charity



we increase rather than diminish the evil, for, as Sir Edward Fry has well said, "the beneficence of one generation becomes the burthen and the injury of all succeeding ones." "Vastly more effective than ten million dollars to charity," remarks in the same spirit Dr. Davenport, the Director of the New York Station for Experimental Evolution, "would be ten millions to Eugenics. He who by such a gift should redeem mankind from vice, imbecility, and suffering would be the world's wisest philanthropist." There is no need to put such an expenditure of wealth in opposition to charity. It would be charity, and in accordance with the whole Christian conception and tradition of charity. But it would be charity according to knowledge, charity applied at the right spot, and not merely allowed to run to waste, or, worse, to turn to poison.

But it is not only in themselves that the feeble-minded are a burden on the present generation and a menace to future generations. They are seen to be even a more serious danger when we realize that in large measure they form the reservoir from which the predatory classes are recruited. This is, for instance, the case as regards the fallen. Feeble-minded girls, of fairly high grade, may often be said to be predestined to immorality if left to themselves, not because they are vicious, but because they are weak and have little power of resistance. They cannot properly weigh their actions against the results of their actions; and even if they are intelligent enough to do that, they are still too weak to regulate their actions accordingly. Moreover, even when, as often happens among the high-grade feeble-minded, they are quite able and willing to work, after they have lost their respectability by having a

child the opportunities for work become more restricted, and they drift into prostitution. It has been found that of nearly 15,000 women who passed through Magdalen Homes in England, over 2,500, or more than 16 per cent—and this is probably an under-estimate—were definitely feeble-minded. The women belonging to this feeble-minded group were known to have added 1,000 illegitimate children to the population. In Germany Bonhoeffer found among 190 prostitutes who passed through a prison that 102 were hereditarily degenerate, and 53 feeble-minded. This would be an over-estimate as regards average prostitutes, though the offences were no doubt usually trivial; but, in any case, the association between prostitution and feeble-mindedness is intimate. Everywhere, there can be no doubt, a considerable proportion of these women were, at the very outset, in some slight degree feeble-minded, mentally and morally a little blunted through some taint of inheritance.

Criminality, again, is associated with feeble-mindedness in the most intimate way. Not only do criminals tend to belong to large families, but the families that produce feeble-minded offspring also produce criminals, while a certain degree of feeble-mindedness is extremely common among criminals, and the most hopeless and typical, though fortunately rare, kind of criminal, frequently termed a "moral imbecile," is nothing more than a feeble-minded person whose defect is shown not so much in his intelligence as in his feelings and his conduct. Sir H. B. Donkin, who speaks with great authority on this matter, states that though it is very difficult to obtain the early history of the criminals who enter English prisons, he is "able to assert with much



confidence that a significant proportion of them are of primarily defective mental capacity," and elsewhere he states this proportion as 20 per cent. This would mean that every year some 35,000 feeble-minded persons are sent to our English prisons as "criminals." The tendency of criminals to belong to the feeble-minded class is indeed every day becoming more clearly recognized. At Pentonville, putting aside prisoners who were too mentally affected to be fit for prison discipline, 18 per cent of the adult prisoners and 40 per cent of the juvenile offenders were found to be feeble-minded. This includes only those whose defect is fairly obvious, and is not the result of methodical investigation. It is certain that such methodical inquiry would reveal a very large proportion of cases of less obvious mental defect; thus the scientific and systematic examination of a number of delinquent children in an industrial school showed that in 75 per cent of the cases they were defective as compared to normal children, and that their defectiveness was probably inborn. Even the possession of a considerable degree of cunning is no evidence against mental defect, but may rather be said to be a sign of it, for it shows an intelligence unable to grasp the wider relations of life and concentrated on the gratification of petty and immediate desires. Thus it happens that the cunning of criminals is frequently associated with almost inconceivable stupidity.

Though it is not usually easy to investigate the heredity of criminals, wherever it has been found possible to do this with care the proportion of those who spring from a bad stock—taking into account not only feeble-mindedness, but other abnormal and morbid conditions of related character—has always been

found to be large. The percentage varies between 40 and 90 per cent, and one investigator only found from 4 to 5 per cent criminals whose parents were really sound. It is perhaps not surprising that nearly 60 per cent of our prisoners have been in prison before—sometimes many times. Here again we see that the improvement of the conditions of life, necessary as it is, still remains without fruit unless we also improve life, we improve the quality of our prisons, we spend much trouble and expense on their sanitation; but we do next to nothing to improve the quality of the prisoners themselves. It must be added that a small beginning has been made, as by the establishment of the Borstal Institution, in the introduction of more radically curative methods for the treatment of criminals, and the effort to give greater impetus to this movement is in England well represented by the Penal Reform League.

Closely related to the great feeble-minded class, and from time to time falling into crime, are the inmates of workhouses, tramps, and the unemployable. The so-called "able-bodied" inmates of our workhouses are frequently found, on medical examination, to be in more than 50 per cent cases mentally defective, equally so whether they are men or women. Tramps, by nature and profession, who overlap the workhouse population, and are estimated to number 20,000 to 50,000 in England and Wales, when the genuine unemployed are eliminated, are everywhere found to be a very degenerate class, among whom the most mischievous kinds of feeble-mindedness and mental perversion prevail, as well as the tendency to petty criminality and sometimes to more serious crime. Inebriates—the people

who are chronically and helplessly given to drink—largely belong to the same great family, and do not so much become feeble-minded because they drink, but possess the tendency to drink because they have a strain of feeble-mindedness from birth. Dr. Branthwaite, Home Office Inspector under the Inebriates Act, and the chief English authority on this question, finds that of the inebriates who come to his notice under this Act, putting aside altogether the group of actually insane persons, about sixty-three per cent are mentally either “defective” or “very defective,” and scarcely more than a third of the whole number of “average mental capacity.” It is evident that these people, even if restored to sobriety, would still retain their more or less inborn defectiveness, and would remain equally unfit to become the parents of the coming generation.

These are the kind of people—tramps, prostitutes, paupers, criminals, inebriates, all tending to be born a little defective—who largely make up the great degenerate families whose histories are from time to time recorded. Such a family was that of the “Jukes” in America, who, in the course of five generations, produced 709 known descendants who were on the whole unfit for society, and have been a constant danger and burden to society. A still larger family of the same kind, more recently studied in Germany, consisted of 834 known persons all descended from a drunken vagabond woman, probably somewhat feeble-minded, but physically vigorous; the great majority of these descendants were prostitutes, tramps, paupers and criminals (some of them murderers), and the direct cost in money to the Prussian State for the keep and care of

this woman and her family has been a quarter of a million pounds.

Yet another such family is that of the "Zeros." Three centuries ago they were highly respectable people living in a Swiss valley. But they intermarried with an insane stock, and subsequently married other women of an unbalanced nature. In recent times 310 members of this family have been studied, and it is found that vagrancy, feeble-mindedness, mental troubles, pauperism, immorality, are, as it may be termed, their patrimony.

These classes, with their tendency to weak-mindedness, their inborn laziness, lack of vitality, and unfitness for organized activity, contain the people who complain that they are starving for want of work, though they will never perform any work that is given them. A philanthropic gentleman, anxious to help them, made the attempt with over seven hundred such individuals; more than two-thirds of this number never even presented themselves; a few did half a day's work, took their pay, and departed; only one in forty continued to work. All similar experiments produce much the same results. These people claim sympathy as unemployed—they are really unemployable.

It is nowadays highly important to distinguish the unemployable who will not, and to some extent cannot, work, from the unemployed who are anxious to work, although there are a certain proportion who stand midway between the two classes. As social reform progresses there is an increasing resolve to meet, so far as possible, the demands of the genuine unemployed, and to lighten their burdens as far as may be. But so long as the two classes are confused, the genuine un-

employed cannot fail to suffer for the faults of the unemployable, while the unemployable will receive a degree of sympathy and consideration which is merely wasted on them. It is necessary to realize that the unemployable are to a large extent what they are by inborn defect, and that they must be weeded out from among the simply unemployed and receive entirely different treatment.

It will be seen that in this sketch of the problem before us in an effort to regenerate the race, much stress is laid on the feeble-minded in the full sense of that term. Little has been said of insanity, which differs from feeble-mindedness by being acquired during life, though nearly always on a basis of inherited weakness. There is a reason for attempting to make this distinction, notwithstanding the fact that in many families feeble-mindedness is found side by side with insanity and has indeed been said to be the tree upon which most insanities are grafted. Feeble-mindedness is an absolute dead weight on the race; it is an evil that is unmitigated. The heavy and complicated social burdens and injuries it inflicts on the present generation are without compensation, while the unquestionable fact that in all degrees it is highly inheritable renders it a deteriorating poison to the race; it depreciates the whole quality of a people. But insanity is not so fatal, so incurable, so altogether without compensation. The candidates for insanity may never become insane, or, having become insane, they may recover. Such candidates for insanity may be the best of people, above the average in intelligence, in conduct, in ideals; even in their eccentricities they may furnish a necessary element of variety and color to life. We need

not, indeed, share the fear of those who think that if the insane disappeared or ceased to propagate there would be no more genius. It is certainly true that some men of the highest genius have themselves been on the borderland, and even over the borderland, of insanity, but it rarely or never happens that people of genius spring from parents who were definitely insane. If, however, we wish to attack these problems radically we are wise to concentrate ourselves, in the first place, on the problem of feeble-mindedness.

It remains true that the question of insanity is a large and serious question; it causes far more suffering even than feeble-mindedness, and is scarcely less inheritable. We must certainly expect, and desire, our efforts for the regeneration of the race to lead to a notable diminution in the number of the insane. The fact that the great era of social reform has led to no such diminution—even if it has not, as many believe, been accompanied by an increase in insanity—is one of the most damning facts against the mere attempt to improve the conditions of life only, while leaving life itself untouched.

The absolute number of the certified insane is constantly increasing, and their ratio to the population is rising. In 1859 there were 36,000 certified insane persons in England and Wales, or less than 19 per 10,000 of the population; in 1910 there were over 130,000, or more than 36 per 10,000 of the population. The insane have increased 255 per cent, while the general population has only increased 84 per cent. The increase is in great measure only apparent and due in part to the larger number who come under care and in part to the ever increasing number of old cases who

are housed in asylums under better conditions; the rate of real increase among the insane now seems to be falling towards the rate of increase in the general population, and so far as it is a real increase, it is perhaps confined to the lowest and most degenerate part of the population. It is but a poor result for the energy and money spent in improving the social environment during the past fifty years. The actual cost in money which the sane are put to for the maintenance of the insane, remains heavy. Pauper lunatics form over 91 per cent of all the certified insane, and the annual cost of the maintenance of the patients in the County and Borough Asylums of England and Wales is nearly 2,600,000 pounds, a sum that is necessarily growing larger every year, although the Commissioners consider that in some asylums the food is still inadequate. It may be added that during recent years the sum of 22,000,000 pounds has been provided at the public cost solely for building and enlarging lunatic asylums, not reckoning the cost of purchasing the land, or the constant large additional sums needed for repairs.



## CHAPTER III

## THE NEXT STEP IN SOCIAL REFORM

If we sum up the results of our survey so far, we see that it has served to bring out two points. In the first place we have found that the great movement of social reform of the past seventy years, in all of the four stages which have each rendered it more extensive and more thorough, has been concerned mainly with the improvement of the conditions of life, and has been in no sense a direct effort to improve the quality of life itself. In the second place, we have found that this movement of social reform, while it has been inevitable and necessary, and is even yet by no means an end, has not fulfilled, and cannot fulfil the expectations of those who set it in motion. It has even had the altogether undersigned and unexpected result of increasing the burden it was intended to remove. Bad conditions of life have this compensation that, though they produce an intolerable amount of sordid degradation and misery, they kill off their worst victims. Natural selection, as we say, comes into operation and the more unfit are destroyed, while the more fit survive. It is not a satisfactory operation from any point of view, and even the survivors suffer; that, indeed, is where the weakness of what we call "natural selection" comes in; it kills off the unfit, no doubt, and that may be well, but it goes farther and tends to render the fit unfit, and that is not well.

"A high infantile mortality rate denotes a



far higher infantile deterioration rate," says Dr. George Carpenter, a great authority on the disease of childhood, or, as another doctor puts it, "the dead baby is next of kin to the diseased baby." It is doubtless a significant fact that the districts with a high death-rate are also, as has lately been found, the districts with a high lunacy rate; the selection of death kills off the unfit, but it does not necessarily improve the quality of those it spares; though it seems, at all events, to make a rough attempt to preserve, on the whole, the level of life. But whatever the exact action of natural selection may be, as soon as we begin to interfere with it and improve the conditions of life, by caring for the unfit, enabling them to survive and to propagate their like—as they will not fail to do in so far as they belong to unfit stocks—then we are certainly, without intending it, doing our best to lower the level of life. We increase, or at best retain the unfit, while at the same time we burden the fit with the task of providing for the unfit. In this way we deteriorate the general quality of life in the next generation, except in so far as our improvement of the environment may enable some to remain fit who under less favorable conditions would join the unfit.

It is now possible for us to realize how the way lies open to the next great forward step in social reform. On the one hand the progressive movement of improvement in the conditions of life by proceeding steadily back, as we have seen, to the conditions before birth renders the inevitable next step a deliberate control of life itself. On the other hand the new social feeling which has been generated by the task of improving the conditions of life and

of caring for those who are unable to care for themselves has made possible a new conception of responsibility to the race. We have realized, practically and literally, that we are our brothers' keepers. We are beginning to realize that we are the keepers of our children, of the race that is to come after us. Our sense of social responsibility is becoming a sense of racial responsibility. It is that enlarged sense of responsibility which renders possible what we call the regeneration of the race.

We cannot lay too much stress on this sense of responsibility, for it is its growth which alone renders possible any regeneration of the race. So far as practical results are concerned, it is not enough for men of science to investigate the facts and the principles of heredity and to attempt to lay down the laws of eugenics, as the science which deals with the improvement of the race is now called. It is not alone enough for moralists to preach. The hope of the future lies in the slow development of those habits, those social instincts arising inevitably out of the actual facts of life and deeper than science, deeper than morals. The new sense of responsibility, of responsibility not only for the human lives that now are but the new human lives that are to come, is a social instinct of this fundamental nature. Therein lies its vitality and its promise.

It is only of recent years that it has been rendered possible. Until lately the methods of propagating the race continued to be the same as those of savages thousands of years ago. Children "came," and their parents disclaimed all responsibility for their coming; the children were sent by God, and if they all turned out to be idiots the responsibility was God's. That is all changed now. We

have learnt that in this, as in other matters, the Divine force works through us, and that we are not entitled to cast the burden of our evil actions on to any Higher Power. It is we who are, more immediately the creators of men. We generate the race; we alone can regenerate the race.

The voluntary control of the number of offspring, which is now becoming the rule in all civilized countries in every part of the world, has been a matter of concern to some people, who have realized that, however desirable under the conditions, it may be abused. But there are two points about it which we should do well always to bear in mind. In the first place it is the inevitable result of advance in civilization. Reckless abandonment to the impulse of the moment and careless indifference to the morrow, the selfish gratification of individual desire at the expense of probable suffering to lives that will come after—this may seem beautiful to some persons, but it is not civilization. All civilization involves an ever-increasing forethought for others, even for others who are yet unborn.

In the second place, it is not only inevitable but it furnishes us with the only available lever for raising the level of our race. In classic days, as in the East, it was possible to consider infanticide as a permissible method for attaining this end, or for terminating at the outset any life that for any reason it might seem desirable to terminate. That is no longer possible for us. We must go farther back. We must control the beginnings of life. And that is a better method, even a more civilized method, for it involves greater forethought, and a finer sense of the value of life.

Today all classes in the community, save the

lowest and the most unfit, exercise some degree of forethought and control in regulating the size of their families. That it should be precisely the unfit who procreate in the most reckless manner is a lamentable fact, but it is not a hopeless fact, and there is no need for the desperate remedy of urging the fit to reduce themselves in this matter to the level of the unfit. That would merely be a backward movement in civilization. The remedy is to be found, as Mr. Balfour has lately pointed out, in the gradual movement of social reform in the conditions of life, the necessity of which here, again, becomes visible. For it is education, sobriety, and some degree of well-being which lead to the control of the size of families, and as it is social amelioration which brings this result about, it is a result which we may view with equanimity. In our own country, as the last census shows, there has been the enormous increase in the population during ten years of nearly four millions, notwithstanding an increased emigration—absolutely, though not relatively, the largest increase that has ever taken place in a similar period—which shows that our birth-rate is still high, perhaps unduly high. It used to be feared that a falling birth-rate was a national danger. We now know that this is not the case, for not only does a falling birth-rate lead to a falling death-rate, but in these matters no nation moves by itself. Civilization is international, though one nation may be a little before or behind another. Here France has been ahead, but all other nations have followed; in Germany, for instance, which is sometimes regarded as a rival of England, the birth-rate is falling just as in England. Russia, indeed, is an exception, but Russia is not only behind

England but behind Germany in the march of civilization; its birth-rate is high, its death-rate is high; a large proportion of its population live on the verge of famine. We are not likely to take Russia as our guide in this matter; we have gone through that stage long ago.

But at the stage we have now reached it is no longer a question of gaining control over the production of the new generation, but of using that control, and of using it in such a way that we may help to leave the world better than we found it. We have not truly gained the sense of responsibility which civilization is putting into our hands if we think we are justified in using our power merely for our own selfish ends. "What has posterity done for me that I should do anything for posterity?" someone is said to have asked. The answer is that to the human race that went before him he owes everything, and that he can only repay the debt to those who come after him. There is more than one way in which we may repay our debt to the race, but there is no better way than by leaving behind us those who are fit to carry on the tasks of life to higher ends than we have ourselves, perhaps, been able to attain. It was a crime, Plato thought, for a man to refuse himself voluntarily the advantages of that immortality which our children give us. We have lost that point of view. Children have been without value in the world because there have been too many of them; they have been produced by a blind and helpless instinct, and have been allowed to die by the hundred thousand. For more than a half century after the era of social reform set in there was no decline at all in the enormous infantile mortality. It is only now beginning as the inevitable accompaniment of

the decline in the birth-rate. Not the least service done by the fall in the birth-rate has been to teach us the worth of our children.

At the point which we have now reached, we are faced by the necessity of realizing a new responsibility—our responsibility for the coming race. We possess the power, if we will, deliberately and consciously to create a new race, to mould the world of the future. As we realize our responsibility we see that our new power of control is not merely for the end of limiting the quantity of human life, perhaps for a selfish object, but for the higher end of improving its quality. It is in our power not only to generate life, but, if we will, to regenerate life. If we realize that possibility, and if we understand how the course of civilization has now brought it within our grasp, we have reached the heart of our problem.

Practically, indeed, as will be realized by the reader of the series to which these remarks are meant as an introduction, this great central problem resolves itself into many minor but still highly important problems. Regarding some of these problems, there are differences of opinion even among those best qualified to judge. And it may well be that even the workers who pursue very different lines provided they have realized the central problem, may still work in harmony.

Our greatest foe, apart from indifference, is ignorance. Even science is in this field only beginning to feel its way, while the masses have still to unlearn many prejudices of the past. We cannot expect to make great progress in any movement which aims at the regeneration of the race until we have trained the parents of the race, alike in the elementary facts concerning the beginnings of life.

and in the responsibilities which a knowledge of these facts lays upon us. This education, to be effective, must begin as regards its first elements in childhood. The child at its mother's knees is not too young to hear from her lips the sacred facts concerning his own origin; in a few years indeed he will be too old, for he will have learnt those facts from a worse source, perhaps in the gutter; and instead of being beautiful to him, as they might and could be, they will be merely dirty. Unfortunately, the mother is still often quite unfitted to take up her natural duty as her child's teacher in this matter. So it comes about that the child learns false ideas of sex because his mother cannot teach him better, or even by her mere silence inculcates false ideas herself, and the mother is a bad teacher because she herself was badly trained as a child. It is a vicious circle which we have to break, and one of our problems is concerned with the best way of breaking it, and so ensuring that the ideas and feelings of our children concerning the intimate mechanism by which the regeneration, and even the generation, of the race must be accomplished are not tainted at their source. We cannot expect much progress to be made in any movement for the regeneration of the race unless we can ensure some degree of purity of spirit here at the outset.

At the age of puberty, when the child is growing into a man or woman, the problem of education in relation to the regeneration of the race becomes larger and is no longer confined to its family aspect. During recent years much has been written about "the truth we owe to youth" in these matters. It has been generally felt that we must supplement



the part that should rightly and naturally be played by the parents, and that some degree of knowledge bearing on sexual hygiene should be imparted in schools. In Germany and in America this movement has been carried out to a considerable extent, both in boys' schools and in girls' schools, with results that are regarded as encouraging. It is a serious question what points this instruction should cover and who should impart it. As a rule the ordinary teacher is not qualified for such teachings. Abstract knowledge, such as anatomy and physiology, can be very properly taught in the school, but it is less clear that advice and warning, capable of personal application, can be properly or effectively given in the school. Here, perhaps, a private conversation with a doctor, suitably trained for the delicate duty, would be better. When, however, the pupil is about to go out into the world, at the end of the school course, more precise and systematic knowledge becomes necessary. Here we may well follow the Germans, who are accustomed at this stage to give special lectures on sexual hygiene to both sexes, dealing with the difficulties which in this matter are encountered in the world, and not omitting the risks of those special sexual diseases which are such terrible racial poisons and which it is highly necessary for all young men and young women, even the most virtuous, to have some knowledge of. All these considerations raise problems which we have to settle before we can set about to regenerate the race.

The new Schools for Mothers, already mentioned, furnish the possibility of very valuable developments in these educational directions. Nature has so arranged it that the questions of sex necessarily concern women more than



men, and has laid upon women the need for a pre-occupation with matters of sex, and a burden of pain in connection with it, which must always be serious whatever the compensations may be. Since woman's burden culminates in motherhood and the bearing of children, it certainly seems desirable that attendance at Schools for Mothers, instituted with a wide conception of their functions, should form part of the training of all girls. This is desirable apart altogether from the question whether a girl is likely to become a mother. Most women are at some time or another entrusted with the care of children; for all women a knowledge of childhood and training in dealing with them is a valuable experience while as regards the majority who will become mothers themselves, there cannot be the slightest doubt that such schools must perform a most valuable function. They cannot fail to be instrumental in reducing the infantile death-rate, while they will increase the sense alike of the responsibility and the privilege of creating children, and thus powerfully aid in racial regeneration.

It is at the age of puberty that another influence comes in, or should come in, to reinforce knowledge with the might of personal inspiration, and that is religion. At this age, when normally the voice of sex first makes itself clearly heard, the large ideal impulses begin to wake in the budding man's or woman's breast. The young creature becomes conscious of a deep inner life, never before suspected, and realizes new personal and impersonal bonds with the not-self without. The churches have of old recognized the significance of this age by making it the period of confirmation, just as savages also have made it the age of their sacred rites of initiation

into the duties of manhood and womanhood, and modern psychologists have shown the great inner developments that tend to take place at this time. It is one of our problems how we can best encourage this spiritual force to develop healthfully and normally, and how we can enable it to guide and purify and control the physical impulses of sex which also begin to gain strength at this age. In the past we have, indeed, been convinced of the importance of religion, but we have often degraded it by our ignorance. We have sought to bind an inner grace with fetters, and to reduce the wind of the spirit, that bloweth where it listeth, to an empty formalism, dinned into the ears of children. The results are plain enough. It still remains a problem how far we have the insight and the faith to readjust our practice in accordance with better knowledge.

But if the question of the relation of religion to the regeneration of the race still remains a problem, there is yet another problem before us in the question of moral instruction. Religion is a grace and a privilege, an impulse of the heart which may be stifled by bad teaching, and cannot be generated by the best teaching if the inner impulse is lacking. But moral instruction stands on a totally different and much more prosaic level. Every child can be taught the elementary notions of justice and truthfulness, and honesty, and courtesy, his duties to himself and those duties towards others which are the natural results of living in relationship with others. In great urban centers, in which now the vast majority of children live, such moral instruction becomes both easy and necessary. It forms the

basis of civic education, and, if made really effective, it becomes one of the factors in the regeneration of the race we are looking for. How we can best make it effective is among the problems presented to us for solution.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE QUESTION OF EUGENICS

When we consider those influences already at work among us, which, as we have seen, have permanently set up a mighty and ever increasing machinery for the improvement of the conditions of life, and have at the same time encouraged a new spirit of forethought, of self-control, of social responsibility; and when we further consider the influences which we now see, are beginning to make themselves felt among us in the training of the young even from the earliest years to the part they have to play in the life of sex for the regeneration of the race, we realize how naturally we are today brought up to those questions of eugenics, of the higher breeding of the race, which are closely grouped around our central problem.

Until very recent years the problem of breeding has been unduly limited. It has, on the one hand, been an effort to exercise forethought and to gain self-control, in order to put a stop to the reckless expenditure of life which prevailed a century and less ago, and to ensure that no children shall be brought into the world who cannot be properly cared for by parents who really desire to have them, and who are able to provide for them. On the other hand, it has been an effort to react against undue self-restraint by those who were fearful that thereby the unfit would propagate at the cost of the fit, and that a decreased birth-rate would place the nation exhibiting it at a disadvantage as against other

nations. There have been ardent enthusiasts on both sides. But with our new outlook and our new knowledge the whole problem is becoming transformed. We now know that there is no need to spend any excess of energy in preaching self-control and forethought, because they are part of every sound civilization, inevitable and almost automatically extending to the sphere of breeding as to every other sphere. We also now know that there is no need to fear that in the long run one class will benefit at the expense of another, for we are concerned with a tendency which, though it always begins with the most well-to-do classes, slowly extends to all classes; already the working classes produce smaller families on the average than half a century ago, and before long the great movement for the improvement of social conditions will so far raise the level of well-being that every class without exception will find it worth while to exercise forethought and self-control. We know, further, that this tendency of civilization cannot nowadays injure one nation as against another nation, for the excellent reason that today the nations are all of one family, and that the impulses that stir one nation stir all nations though in slightly varying degrees. And we know, finally, that every fall in the birth-rate means a fall in the death-rate, in the disease-rate, in the rate of misery, an immense saving not only in money but in human happiness and social effort. Thus it is that though the birth-rate in England has steadily fallen during the past ten years, the increase in population, though at a somewhat lower rate, has been, absolutely, greater than ever before, for the death-rate is also falling. Any attempt to put a spoke in the wheel of progress by reducing the fit to the uncivilized level of the unfit, even if it were possible,

would be useless, for it would merely serve to increase the death-rate, the disease-rate, and the misery-rate. It is worse than idle, therefore, to listen to those who pine for the return of the days, seventy years gone by, when the birth-rate was high, for at that time in some of our chief cities (such as Manchester and Leeds) of every thousand children born, six hundred died before reaching the age of five. It is necessary to emphasize these points, for there are still many among us who have not yet realized them, and who waste their energy by beating the air, not only vainly indeed but sometimes mischievously.

As we are now able to view this question, we see that there is little need at the present time, either to urge restriction on the output of children, or to urge the absence of restriction. These matters will be attended to independently of our attempts at interference, through the operation of forces already at work. On the one hand, the birth-rate will not yet cease to fall, but, on the other hand, people will increasingly realize how precious children are, and they will ever more and more seek that their children, though few, should be fit.

There indeed, is one of our main problems when we seek to regenerate the race. How can we be reasonably sure that we are likely to produce fit children? The best efforts of scientific men to answer this question have not yet resulted in answers which can be applied to given cases with certainty. Scientific eugenics is still in an early stage, and the more mature knowledge of animal breeders, who breed for points, furnishes little help when we are dealing with men and women. Even some of the conclusions which have been formulated

by scientific workers will probably need revision, or at all events interpretation, in the light of further facts and researches. There are some conclusions which may be set forth with a reasonable certainty, but they are not many. For some time to come it will be necessary to retain a cautious and sceptical attitude in the face of undue dogmatism in this field. More knowledge, we may be sure, will come in time. In the meanwhile, we may be thankful that the questions which that knowledge will answer are being so anxiously put. For, there can be no doubt, the sense not only of social responsibility but of responsibility for the future of the race, the duty towards the next generation, really is growing amongst us, though cynics doubt whether such considerations can ever influence the selfish desires of men and women. But they are tending to do so, as many doctors can bear witness. Galton, during the last years of his life, believed that we are approaching a time when eugenic considerations will become a factor of religion, and when our existing religious conceptions will be reinterpreted in the light of a sense of social needs so enlarged as to include the needs of the race which is to come. Certainly, for those who have been taught to believe that man was in the first place created by God, it should not be difficult to realize the Divine nature of the task of human creation which has since been placed in the hands of men, to recognize it as a practical part of religion, and to cherish the sense of its responsibilities. Moreover, it is not true that men have ever felt free to choose their mates for life at random. The savage and the civilized are alike bound by restrictions which few dare to overpass. There have always been castes



and classes into which a man was free to marry, and a much greater number of castes and classes from which by rigorous custom, or even severe penalties, he was prohibited from marrying into. There is no great hardship involved in the injunction to marry into the caste of the well-born, the class of the healthy, and the less hardship since those castes and classes will always be, on the whole, the most attractive.

It is part of our problem to consider how best we may reconcile the claims of the race with the claims of individual freedom. The ground for such reconciliation is prepared if we remember that, as we have seen, the development of the sense of personal responsibility is implied in the growth of our civilization. The finer breeding of the race is a matter that is primarily settled in the individual conscience. It is childish to suppose that it can be regulated by mere Act of Parliament. The law is a dead letter, disregarded or evaded, if it is not the outcome of the personal conviction of the people; and if it is merely, as it ought to be, the formal registration of that conviction, it is still a comparatively unimportant matter. It is the developed individual conscience, guided by a new sense of responsibility, and informed by a new knowledge, that any regeneration of the race must be rooted.

If our new knowledge in this field is still very imperfect, there is one point concerning which general agreement may be said to be reached, and that is the desirability of breeding out so far as possible, the feeble-minded. Even the Mendelian students of heredity, who, with considerable reason, regard inheritance as a highly complicated matter, conclude that, at all events, we may feel sure that it will be



well, if possible, to eliminate the feeble-minded from the race. No doubt there are some who would regret the disappearance of weak-mindedness with its possibilities of the "divine fool," and so it may be as well to say that there is no chance of eliminating the occasional possibility of imbecility, or allied conditions, as a natural spontaneous variation. It is the feeble-minded families with their complicated and multiform ramifications which we may safely try to root up. That is why on previous pages it has been thought well to exhibit some of these ramifications of feeble-mindedness, and to show how much social and racial damage they cause. If we seek to classify the feeble-minded, taken in the largest mass, with reference not to their forms but to the degree of their mental defectiveness, they may be said (following Damaye's classification) to fall into four groups: (1) Complete idiots who live a merely vegetative existence; (2) incomplete idiots with few and rudimentary ideas; (3) imbeciles, with limited and often perverted ideas, but capable of being taught to read and write; and (4) the weak-minded who can be educated to a varying extent by special methods. The need of confining and caring for the first two classes is fairly clear; the feeble-minded of the third class obviously require special attention because they are capable of being very mischievous. It is the large fourth class which presents the most difficult problem.

A considerable proportion of the higher grade feeble-minded can, with careful training, be taught to earn their living in the world. The bulk of them need to be isolated from the world in special institutions and colonies, where they can to some extent be utilized, where they will do no harm to themselves or

others, and be reasonably safe from the risk of propagating their kind. This was the main recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-Minded in 1908. It will, however, be an expensive and costly measure if carried out on an adequate scale. It must also be remembered that the improved education and training of the hereditary feeble-minded, in order to fit them for some work in the world at large, will not enable them to produce any fitter offspring than if they had remained untaught and untrained. In view of these considerations it seems desirable to supplement the recommendations of the Royal Commission by the adoption of methods for rendering those of the feeble-minded who are free to move about in the world unable to propagate their kind, as can now be done in simple and harmless ways. This measure was not put before the Royal Commission in any effective and well-informed manner, but, since the Commissioners issued their report, it has gained much favor in authoritative quarters as a measure required in the interests both of social well-being and the regeneration of the race. On these grounds it has been introduced as a voluntary measure, requiring no special legislation, in some parts of Switzerland. It is highly desirable that these measures should be placed on this basis, and not made compulsory by Act of Parliament, as some enthusiasts demand. The feeble-minded realizing their own weakness, are often willing, and even anxious, to be in this way protected against themselves. To make such a practice compulsory, or to apply it to criminals who are not hereditarily feeble-minded would not only be on many grounds undesirable, but it would unnecessarily discredit the method. It is the more reasonable, as well as the more

Christian plan to allow the unfit to make themselves "eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake," and not as a punishment. For the same reason it should not even be applied to irresponsible lunatics who are under restraint.

Even, however, if we confine our preventive methods to the feeble-minded our problem still remains very extensive, for we have to remember that feeble-mindedness accounts for a large part of that burden of pauperism which the gigantic machinery of the Poor Law was devised to deal with, and which a Royal Commission investigated in the most elaborate detail only a few years ago. That Commission, in the ponderous volumes it produced, set forth some excellent recommendations on matters of detail. But it failed to go to the root of the matter and devised no method for damming the stream of pauperism at its source. The more perfectly the Poor Law machinery works, the more it encourages the evil it seeks to deal with. That is so because of the nature of the human material composing the great bulk of pauperism. It is mentally defective, so that the workhouse (which seems to awful a fate to ordinary poor people) is as welcome to the pauper as the prison often is to the criminal. An investigation not long since carried out at the instance of the Council of the Eugenics Education Society, though not extensive in its scope, perhaps brings us nearer to the remedy for pauperism than all the elaborate recommendations of the Royal Commissioners. It was found that paupers tend to belong to pauper families, even to the fourth generation, and that they tend to intermarry with pauper families; it was also found that they tend to manifest more or less obvious signs of mental weakness, and the conclusion was inevitable

that their hereditary pauperism was based on an inheritance of mental defect. It is obvious that all our philanthropy directed to the present generation only will not remove this kind of pauperism but rather increase it; we need to extend our philanthropy to the generations to come. And if, for instance, we resolved, with all proper precautions, in the case of these defective paupers of the second, third, or later generations, not to give Poor Law relief, except to those who had voluntarily consented, as a condition of such relief, to undergo the preventive surgical treatment referred to, we should be effectively working for the abolition of pauperism. Even in a single generation it would have become one of the most manageable of our problems.

In these simple and practical ways—by specially training the feeble-minded, by confining them in suitable institutions and colonies, and by voluntary sacrifice of procreative power on the part of those who are able to work in the world—we shall be able, even in a single generation, largely to remove one of the most serious and burdensome taints in our civilization, and so mightily work for the regeneration of the race. "One might wear any passion out of a family by culture, as skilful gardeners blot a color out of a tulip that hurts its beauty." It is more than two hundred years since those words were written; we are only today beginning to accept seriously the great principle they embody; and to apply it earnestly for the heightening of man's physical and spiritual beauty.

If even the problem of the extirpation of the feeble-minded classes can be approached and largely settled on a voluntary basis, without any risky experiments in legislation, much

more is this the case with the higher breeding of the race, as it may be exercised by the fully sane and responsible classes. Here is emphatically the field of the moralist, who need not feel called on to forfeit his claim to be a moralist by clamoring for the brute force of law. Even if scientific opinion and general public opinion were ready for marriage legislation in the interests of the regeneration of the race it would still be a problem how far such legislation is likely to be in accordance with sound morals. For legislation can only demand actions that are both generalized and externalized, and the demands of the regeneration of the race must be both particularized and internalized, or they are meaningless and even void. The law may, for instance, enact prohibitions against certain kinds of people marrying, but it cannot so prevent procreation, and the mere prohibition to marry is both unjust and unnecessary in so far as it prevents the unions of people who may be fully aware of their racial disabilities and consequent responsibilities, and ready to act accordingly. Thus it is that morals is called upon to retain jealously within its own sphere these aspects of racial regeneration, and to resent the encroachment of law.

For we have to be on our guard—and that is our final problem, perhaps the most difficult and complex of all—lest our efforts for the regeneration of the race lead us to a mechanical and materialistic conception of life, to the conception of a life regulated by codes and statutes, and adjudicated in law courts. Better an unregenerate life than such a regeneration! For freedom is the breath of life, joy is the prime tonic of life, and no regeneration is worth striving for which fails to increase the total sum of freedom and of joy. Those who are working for racial regeneration must make this very

clear, or they discredit their own aims. This is why it is necessary, in connection with racial regeneration, to deal with literature, with art, and religion, for it is only in so far as these things, and such as these, are rendered larger and freer and more joyous that a regenerated life will have its heightened value. It is useless to work for the coming of the better race if we impose upon it the task of breaking the fetters its fathers have forged. License, indeed, is always evil, for it involves the reckless indifference to the good of others. But license, so far from being the ally of freedom is its deadliest foe. To permit license to the few is to make freedom impossible for the many. Order, self-control, sympathy, intelligent regulation, are necessary in all matters that concern society and the race, because without them there can be no freedom. In the great garden of life it is not otherwise than in our public gardens. We repress the license of those who, to gratify their own childish or perverted desires, would pluck up the shrubs or trample on the flowers, but in so doing we achieve freedom and joy for all. If in our efforts to better social conditions and to raise the level of the race we seek to cultivate the sense of order, to encourage sympathy and foresight, to pull up racial weeds by the roots, it is not that we may kill freedom and joy, but rather that we may introduce the conditions for securing and increasing freedom and joy. In these matters, indeed, the gardener in his garden is our symbol and our guide. The beginning of the world is figured as an ordered and yet free life of joy in a garden. All our efforts for the regeneration of the race can be but a feeble attempt to bring a little nearer that vision of Paradise.

